

# LOBBY BRIEFING

time: 11.00 date: 26.5.82

## PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

The Prime Minister is working at No 10 this morning and after addressing the Conservative Women's Conference this afternoon, she will be present in the House for the Statement by the Defence Secretary, returning to No 10 for the rest of the day.

At 10.00am she chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers concerned with the Falklands (Foreign Sec., Defence Sec., Home Sec., Chancellor of the Duchy, Attorney General and the CDS). (The Home Sec. arrives at 10.30 after addressing the Conservative Women's Conference).

At 2.45 the PM will address the Conservative Women's Conference at the Royal Festival Hall. She will deal with Falklands but is not likely to anticipate Defence Sec's statement.

At 3.30pm the PM will be in the House for the Statement by the Defence Secretary and is expected to stay for the opening speeches of the Debate on the European Community. (Foreign Sec. opening and Mr Hurd winding up).

At 5.15pm the PM will chair a Meeting of Ministers. (E: <sup>Local</sup> Authority Current Expenditure 82/83 and 83/84 and Wages Council).

## PUBLICATION

At 11.30am the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Argyll Vol 4 - Iona (CFRs yesterday).

## IN THE HOUSE

### STATEMENTS

At 3.30pm there will be a statement on the Falklands by the Defence Sec.

### ANSWERS OF INTEREST

No 37 Written 3.30pm: Mr Anthony Grant to ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry on the Crown Agents. (Answer will announce publication of the report today. CFRs were made available in the lobby at 9.30am today for publication at 3.30pm of 'Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into certain issues arising out of the operations of the Crown Agents as financiers on own account in the years 1967-74').

No 38 Written: Mr J D Concannon to ask the S/S Northern Ireland whether he has decided to set up an inquiry into the operations of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. (Answer will indicate the intention to set up a review).

No 126 Written: Mr David Mudd to ask the S/S Industry whether he has approved any plans by the English Industrial Estates Corporation for further public investment in the Assisted Areas of England over the next year. (Answer will announce the allocation for English regions).

### FALKLANDS - YESTERDAY'S MILITARY ACTIVITY

We confirmed that Mr Nott would be making a statement to the House about yesterday's air attack and agreed that it would be bad news. A major attack had been expected because it was Argentina's National Day. It is possible that MoD would make an announcement before Mr Nott's statement to the House. The meeting of Ministers would authorise such a move, just as they authorise all the MoD statements.

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We said that in an ideal world we would always try to inform the House first. They should not infer from this that the announcement is such bad news that it radically changes the situation. We said that MoD had given the bare bones of the action as quickly as they could last night, that details were still unclear and that we could not give any guidance on casualties.

Asked about the PM's reaction and mood we said that we deplore any casualty - on either side - but that when embarking on an exercise of this kind it was inevitable that some casualties would occur. But our position had not changed. We were holding fast to our objective. Our mood was grim but determined - determined to finish the job in hand.

We advised the lobby not to start playing the game of widening the conflict by suggesting this temporary reverse would lead us to attack the Argentine mainland.

## OD(SA)

We said there was no meeting of OD(SA) last night but that today's meeting would be hearing the details of the military action but would also consider the diplomatic activity, which was centred mainly at the UN. There was also diplomatic work going on in Santiago connected with the crew of the abandoned helicopter, and in advance the next meeting of the Organisation of American States. We would also continue expounding our case abroad.

## ASTIZ

Astiz was going the long way home by boat via Britain. He had been taken as a prisoner of war and he would be treated according to the dictates of the Geneva Convention. The Argentines may have prisoners of ours and we would not want to do anything which would jeopardise them. There is no requirement on us to release a POW until the hostilities have ended. Early release of prisoners by both sides up to now has been a concession.

## PM'S SPEECH

The PM is talking to the Conservative Women's Conference this afternoon. She has taken Mr Nott's slot in the programme but we expect him to speak there later. She will amend her speech which will be about the Falklands, as appropriate if further details of the damage are released by MoD.

## UN

It is possible that a motion will emerge from the UN which we find acceptable, especially if it is founded on UNR502. Costa Mendez asked for time to study the Irish moves.

JL

# House of Commons

Tuesday 25 May 1982

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

### PORT OF LONDON BILL

*Lords amendments agreed to.*

### TEES AND HARTLEPOOL PORT AUTHORITY BILL

*(By Order)*

*Read a Second time, and committed.*

## Oral Answers to Questions

### DEFENCE

#### Falkland Islands

1. Mr. Buck asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current situation with respect to the task force in the South Atlantic.

5. Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has had any discussions with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts on the strategic value of the Falkland Islands.

8. Sir William van Straubensee asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on the current military position in the Falkland Islands.

18. Mr. Canavan asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement about the Falkland Islands operations.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. John Nott): I met my NATO colleagues at the beginning of May. Only last Saturday, all members of the North Atlantic Council expressed solidarity with the action that we are taking in the Falkland Islands.

In my statement in the House yesterday, I outlined recent action that had taken place in the South Atlantic leading up to the successful landing on East Falkland on 20 May by Her Majesty's forces and the establishment there of a secure base.

Since then our Harriers have carried out a further successful attack on Port Stanley airfield.

Separately yesterday our task force came under attack from Argentine aircraft. Argentine losses as a result of that action are assessed at eight combat aircraft. Two of our support ships were damaged but they are being made good. I deeply regret the loss of HMS "Antelope" which sank yesterday.

Finally, I should like to deny the latest wild report from Argentina that the "Canberra" has come under attack.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall call first those hon. Members whose questions are being answered.

Mr. Buck: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. Is he satisfied that there is now an appropriate and balanced flow of information coming in from the task force with, hopefully, some of it getting through to Argentina?

Will my right hon. Friend say something further about the possible establishment of a fund for the benefit of the members of the task force and their dependants which he mentioned yesterday?

Mr. Nott: We are getting information from the task force, sometimes not as rapidly as we would wish, but we must understand the serious problems that face our forces.

We feel strongly that there should be one fund, not many, for people who wish to give for dependants. The terms of the fund should be widely drawn so that too much money is not directed at only a few people. The trustees of the fund should have the flexibility to direct donations across the whole spectrum of those in need. The best way to ensure that is to use existing charities. However, we cannot allocate money between charities at this stage as we do not know the relative need. We propose to set up a South Atlantic fund which will not in itself be a charity but will hold money on behalf of existing charities until we have a clearer idea of how best it can be used.

We should appreciate it if members of the general public, who understandably want to make donations, will direct them to this central fund. That will save a lot of confusion and difficulty.

Mr. Atkinson: Is not one of the main lessons to be learnt from the past eight weeks the sheer neglect of the vital strategic importance of the Falkland Islands within a global context, apart from the oil, gas and seabed resources that might exist in that area?

Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that Britain has nothing to concede by way of sovereignty in any future negotiations on the territory? Will he now discuss with our Western allies what part they will play in the future defence of those islands?

Mr. Nott: As I said yesterday, and as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has repeatedly pointed out, British sovereignty is a fact and it cannot be removed by aggression. Of course, we accept the very great importance of Antarctica and the Falkland Islands and the great promise that that part of the world holds out.

Sir William van Straubensee: Does my right hon. Friend understand the not jingoistic but quiet pride felt by the vast majority of British people in the remarkable achievements of the Armed Forces so far? Does he accept that he will have widespread support for any tactical decisions made for strictly military, not political, reasons, whether those reasons are nationally or internationally motivated?

Mr. Nott: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his assertion of the pride that we all feel in our Armed Forces. The whole House and country share that feeling of pride with him. I assure my hon. Friend that tactical decisions will be a matter wholly for the task force commander. Of course, he will work within the broad political directions and the strategic aims laid down for him by Her Majesty's Government.

**Mr. Canavan:** Now that there is even more demand for a ceasefire with British casualties amounting to 73 dead and about 100 wounded and a total of 500 people already having lost their lives in the conflict, why does the chairman of the Tory Party say that diplomacy must now take a back seat? Has the Tory Party become so bloodthirsty that it is now hell-bent on using the crisis for the same reason as Galtieri created it—to distract attention from the problems of mass unemployment and the social and economic crisis here?

**Mr. Nott:** If Argentina had taken notice and acted upon Security Council resolution 502, a ceasefire would have taken place.

**Mr. Viggers:** As one who represents a major naval centre, may I point out that we can be as proud of the families of the men of the task force as of the men themselves? On their behalf, may I ask whether it is necessary, for defence reasons, for news to come so slowly from the task force and to be so vague? The families of the men in the task force are left listening to Argentine broadcasts, without knowing whether the information has any basis of truth.

**Mr. Nott:** There is a great problem about the dissemination of information from the task force. I recognise my hon. Friend's concern. We have to respond quickly to factual information as it is received from the task force to counteract the propaganda that so frequently comes out of Buenos Aires, which is both inaccurate and damaging. Therefore, even if the information that we have is sparse, as soon as we receive it we put it out in order to deal with propaganda from the other side. However, we have always informed the next of kin before making a full announcement to the public. There is a difficult balance to be struck between avoiding propaganda from the other side and informing the next of kin before anyone else.

**Mr. John Silkin:** The Opposition welcome the setting up of a South Atlantic fund. Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that yesterday he was asked about the pension rights of Service men who might be killed or injured? Is he now in a position to make a statement to the House?

**Mr. Nott:** The dependants of Service men will receive a full pension and a lump sum from the Ministry of Defence. In addition, there is, of course, a war widows' pension from the DHSS. The hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Johnston) asked me about the Merchant Marine. Under an agreement with the National Marine Board, provision has been made for compensation for death and injury to be paid to merchant seamen engaged in war-like operations. The levels were enhanced in early April and apply to those merchant seamen sailing with the task force.

**Mr. Robert Atkins:** Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the Sea King helicopters being used in the extremely difficult conditions of the South Atlantic are performing as well as everyone expected? Will he also confirm that the manufacturers have been extremely forthcoming and helpful in supplying spares and technical advice during such a difficult time?

**Mr. Nott:** I confirm what my hon. Friend said about spares from the manufacturers. We have lost some Sea King helicopters by accident. It has been a tragic loss. However, the losses of helicopters in relation to the amount of flying time undertaken have not been great.

Indeed, there have been fewer losses than we might have expected, given that the helicopters have been extremely busy.

**Mr. Douglas:** Does the Secretary of State accept that the South Atlantic fund should also embrace merchant seamen? Will he make that perfectly clear to all concerned? What will be the future loading on the naval dockyards? Given the strain on them now, some of those on shore are extremely concerned about future employment possibilities.

**Mr. Nott:** Through the fund, we shall look to the charities for the Merchant Marine as well as to the Service Charities. As a result of the action—and when it is over—there will be additional work in the dockyards. In due course we shall consider that but it would be wrong to make a premature decision about the amount of extra work required.

### Sea Wolf

2. **Mr. Trotter** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will take steps to accelerate the introduction of Sea Wolf or other means of point defence of Royal Navy vessels against sea skimming missiles and substantially increase the number of vessels to which such systems will be fitted.

**The Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Geoffrey Pattie):** As I have already indicated, we plan to fit Sea Wolf to all Type 22 frigates on construction and to five Leanders at refit. The fitting of point defence systems to other classes of ship is a matter for further consideration.

**Mr. Trotter:** Can my hon. Friend give an assurance that the Soviet Union—our principal potential enemy in the North Atlantic—does not possess a sea skimming missile and that adequate defences against such missiles will be available before the Soviet Union can develop them? Is it not necessary to consider the whole question of air defence? Many of the casualties have resulted from attacks by high performance aircraft dropping very old-fashioned dumb bombs. Does my hon. Friend agree that we should consider the whole question of air defence for the Navy?

**Mr. Pattie:** There will be a need to consider all aspects of the operations after they have been satisfactorily concluded. I agree that when the Falkland episode is over, the Soviet Union will still remain the main threat. I confirm that the Soviet Union lacks that type of sea skimming missile.

**Mr. Jay:** Have the Government yet placed orders with British industry for replacing the ships and aircraft that have been lost?

**Mr. Pattie:** No.

### Trident

3. **Mr. Cryer** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now make a further statement on the implementation of the Trident programme.

7. **Mr. Trippier** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received on the Trident system.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Peter Blaker): Work is continuing satisfactorily on the design of the new class of submarines and on the remainder of the programme necessary to bring the Trident system into operation with the Royal Navy.

Since the announcement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 11 March on the Government's decision to adopt the Trident II D5 system, we have received about 50 letters from members of the public on the subject.

**Mr. Cryer:** Does the Minister accept that the so-called nuclear deterrent has not kept the peace? Does he also accept that, as a result of the losses in the South Atlantic, hundreds of millions of pounds will have to be spent on replacing frigates, destroyers, helicopters and aeroplanes? Given the lunatic cost of the Trident project and the fact that it represents a significant and serious escalation of nuclear weaponry, will the Government now make a belated effort to support peace instead of war and announce the cancellation of the Trident project?

**Mr. Baker:** The hon. Gentleman is wrong about not keeping the peace. The nuclear deterrent has kept the peace in Europe since 1945. There is no cash ceiling on the cost of the operation in the South Atlantic. When the costs are more accurately known and the prospects for defence expenditure as a whole in 1982-83 are clearer, we shall decide to what extent supplementary provision is needed. The main objective of our defence policy must be to meet the main threat, which comes from the Soviet Union. That is why we need a nuclear deterrent.

**Mr. Trippier:** I thank my hon. Friend for reaffirming the Government's commitment to the Trident D5 missile system. Will he assure the House that recent events in the South Atlantic do not alter the fact that it is essential for us to have a nuclear deterrent? Will my hon. Friend also confirm that the success of a flexible response depends on the coexistence of strategic nuclear, theatre nuclear and conventional forces?

**Mr. Blaker:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The main threat continues to be the Soviet Union, which has a wide range of nuclear weapons of different kinds, as well as vast and growing conventional forces. I think it is therefore right to pursue the policies of deterrence and of flexible response which have been pursued by successive Governments, including that of which the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Cryer) was at one time a member.

**Mr. Wellbeloved:** Does the Minister agree that peace in Europe has been maintained since 1945 by a combination of nuclear and conventional arms acting as a deterrent? Does he further agree that the tragedy is that the Government failed to provide an adequate deterrent in the South Atlantic and that that led to the present disaster?

**Mr. Blaker:** That is an entirely different question. I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman's analysis of the causes of the Argentine aggression. Those causes may have had much to do with internal affairs in Argentina.

**Mr. John Silkin:** Is it not a fact that, during the peak years of the programme, the Trident cost will be 20 per cent. of new equipment? How can that be reconciled with a really credible conventional defence policy?

**Mr. Blaker:** I do not recognise the figure quoted by the right hon. Gentleman. It is not one that I have seen. The

right hon. Gentleman will have read the open Government document, which was published at the time of my right hon. Friend's announcement, which showed that, at its peak, the cost of bringing in Trident will be about 11 per cent. of the defence equipment budget for a couple of years.

**Mr. Silkin:** Of the equipment, but not of new equipment. Will the hon. Gentleman direct his mind to my question?

**Mr. Blaker:** I think the right way to approach the problem is to look at the percentage of the total defence budget that is involved. That, as has often been said is 3 per cent. of the total defence budget over the period of 15 years during which Trident is being brought in.

**Mr. Amery:** Does my hon. Friend agree that we could not possibly have sent the task force to the South Atlantic unless we already had an independent nuclear deterrent of our own? Does he further agree that without it we would have been open to nuclear blackmail from the Soviet Union and our entire strategy and diplomacy would have been dependent on our allies? Is not the first lesson to be drawn from the Falkland Islands crisis that we must have a nuclear deterrent of our own now and in the future, and that Trident is the best instrument for that?

**Mr. Blaker:** I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend. It is reassuring to know that, while large parts of our Navy, Army and Air Force are now in the South Atlantic, peace is kept in Europe by our nuclear deterrent.

#### P110 Aircraft

4. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has had on the British Aerospace P110 project.

14. **Lord James Douglas-Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government will consider giving a commitment in principle to developing P110 aircraft, in conjunction with other European countries.

**Mr. Pattie:** My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations from hon. Members stressing the importance of this project for the aerospace industry and urging Government commitment to it.

As I told my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) in the Adjournment debate on 1 March, our studies of our future combat aircraft requirements and options are continuing.

**Mr. Atkins:** I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Is he aware of the vital strategic importance of this new aeroplane for the Royal Air Force, particularly if it means that we do not have to buy from abroad? Is my hon. Friend also aware of the vital importance of this project to British Aerospace, Preston division, in terms of jobs in the design team and keeping the technical operation available? What steps is my hon. Friend taking to find some measure of support, financial or otherwise, from some of our partners in Europe and the rest of the world?

**Mr. Pattie:** The Government are continuing to give all the support that they can to British industry—British Aerospace, in particular—for the development of this project. My hon. Friend will be interested to know that, in pursuance of this aim, I shall later this afternoon be

visiting the Federal Republic of Germany for discussions with German industry and subsequently the Federal Government in Bonn.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Is my hon. Friend aware that the long-term capability of the British aerospace industry to design and produce military combat aircraft depends to a large extent on this project?

**Mr. Pattie:** I agree with my hon. Friend, but he will no doubt accept that this project, in order to get started, will have to rely on a new way of procuring aircraft—that is, a new way of getting development money—and it is to that end that the discussions and consultations are continuing.

**Mr. McNamara:** Is the Minister aware of the impressive lobby that took place on this issue by British Aerospace workers in the House a few weeks ago and of the concern shown at all levels about the need to develop this project? Are the Government prepared to put in extra finance to help British Aerospace to get the project off the ground?

**Mr. Pattie:** There is no basic change in the Government's position, as set out in the White Paper, Cmnd. 8288. As I said in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), we have to see whether we can find different ways of obtaining the money required to fund the development part of the programme.

**Mr. Edward Gardner:** Is my hon. Friend aware of the deep anxiety that is felt about the future of this project by my constituents, and others, who work at Warton and Samlesbury in South Fylde? Does he agree that the development of this quite brilliant warplane is of the utmost importance, nationally as well as locally, and that it deserves, and must get, the fullest and firmest support from the Government?

**Mr. Pattie:** I agree with my hon. and learned Friend about the importance of the project to British industry and to the excellent work force that he has the honour to represent. I have nothing to add to what I have already said on the precise nature of the Government's commitment.

**Mr. Geoffrey Robinson:** Is the Minister aware that the project is vital to Rolls-Royce? I note that discussions are taking place with prospective partners. Will the Minister assure the House that an interim funding arrangement could be made by the Government to ensure that the vital design and development work can proceed and that the prototype development work on the engine and the aeroplane can go on and not be held back?

**Mr. Pattie:** The Government are fully aware of the relevant time scale on the project. As the hon. Gentleman knows, this is a Tornado-related development. The engine is the 67R, and that is already included in future programmes. Among the companies that I shall be seeing later this week will be Motor Turbinen Union.

#### Armed Services (Strength)

6. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the armed services; and how this figure compares with that for three years before.

**The Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Jerry Wiggan):** The strength of the Armed Services

on 31 March 1982 was 327,647 excluding locally entered personnel and reserves. This is 12,656 more than at 31 March 1979.

**Mr. Chapman:** I have noted that increase. Will my hon. Friend confirm that, in the continuing review of defence plans, not only is defence procurement and equipment being reassessed, but the numbers required in each of the Armed Services?

**Mr. Wiggan:** Government policy remains as outlined in Cmnd. 8288, "The United Kingdom Defence Programme: The Way Forward". We shall, of course, seek to learn from the lessons of the current operation as we review it in the future.

**Mr. Radice:** At a time of increasing numbers in the Armed Services, what is the logic of cutting manpower in the Royal Ordnance factories, including Birtley in my constituency?

**Mr. Wiggan:** That is not an area within my direct responsibility, but I understand that the reductions in manpower are entirely related to the business done by the factories.

**Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** Will my hon. Friend confirm not only that the numbers are up, but that the wastage rate of experienced personnel is down and that we are using this opportunity to increase further the standard of recruits coming into the Forces?

**Mr. Wiggan:** I can confirm what my hon. Friend said. Recruiting has improved since the Government took a proper approach to Service pay.

**Mr. McNamara:** In view of the operations in the south Atlantic, what further review will the Government undertake of the strength of the Navy in future years as against the proposed cuts?

**Mr. Wiggan:** I do not think that I have anything to add to what I have just said. We shall, of course, take a sensible view of all the lessons that we shall learn as a result of this operation. The numbers of men, equipment and so on will be looked at in the same light.

#### French Government (Missile Supplies)

9. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his latest discussions with the French Government about the availability of their missiles to the Argentine junta.

**Mr. Nott:** Following the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands, the French Government immediately took action to suspend all arms sales to Argentina. We share with France and much of the rest of the world a common resolve to stand firm against military aggression. The Government are grateful for the help and staunch support from the French Government for the position we have taken.

**Mr. Adley:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that there will be widespread support in the House and the country for what he has just said? Will he take an early opportunity to ensure that the French Government know how widely they are appreciated and how their position is welcomed in this country? In view of the persistent reports of countries such as South Africa and Israel, perhaps, assisting Argentina with the supply of missiles, and in

persuance of the question asked by the right hon. Member for Deptford (Mr. Silkin) yesterday, will my right hon. Friend carry out as detailed an investigation as possible, so that in future we can know who our friends are?

**Mr. Nott:** The main question relates to France, and I should like to emphasise the tremendous support that we have from President Mitterand and the French Government as well as the particular support that I have had from my opposite number, M. Hernu, since the outset of the Falkland Islands problem. As to other countries, as I said yesterday, we continually monitor the movement of arms and look in particular at the dangers for us of the movement of, for example, Exocet missiles to Argentina. That review will continue.

**Mr. Marks:** As most of Argentina's military equipment was sold by NATO countries, is it not time that NATO Defence Ministers and Foreign Ministers examined the whole question of arms sales to countries that may well use the weapons against individual members of NATO?

**Mr. Nott:** I think that this is a matter for individual countries. As the hon. Gentleman knows, we review all our arms sales. We look at each country individually and make a judgment on each case. That has always been the manner in which these policies have been conducted by successive Governments.

#### Arms Sales

10. **Mr. Newens** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will adopt more restrictive criteria in reaching decisions upon individual applications for the sale of arms, following the Falkland Islands dispute.

15. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are to be any changes in the sale of arms policy arising out of the Falkland crisis.

16. **Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether in his review of arms sales to individual countries, especially with regard to the nature of the régime concerned, he will bear particularly in mind circumstances in which such a régime concerned, he will bear particularly in mind circumstances in which such a régime is involved in a territorial dispute with another country.

**Mr. Pattie:** We shall continue to subject all proposals for the sale of military equipment overseas to close individual scrutiny, taking into account all the factors relevant to each particular case.

**Mr. Newens:** Will the Minister confirm that the £120 million worth of arms from Britain and the expertise acquired by Argentine troops trained in Britain are now being used to kill British Service men such as those who were on the Gazelle helicopters that were reported to have been shot down by British-made Blowpipe missiles? Will he now listen to those of us who have consistently argued throughout—even when the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) invited the Argentine air force chief to Britain with a view to arms sales—that it is time that we called an end to this situation, cancelled the British arms exhibition scheduled for June and worked for international agreement to end this trade in the weapons of death?

**Mr. Pattie:** All defence sales are considered individually on their merits, and have been ever since the previous Labour Government established the defence sales organisation in 1966.

**Mr. Newens:** Not with my support.

**Mr. Pattie:** The hon. Gentleman may or may not have supported that development. Nonetheless, it is true. It is also true that previous Labour Governments have supplied large amounts of military equipment to Argentina.

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Dennis Skinner.

**Mr. Skinner** *rose*—

**Hon. Members:** Oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind the House that I am calling first those hon. Members whose questions are being answered.

**Mr. Skinner:** When the battle in the Falkland Islands is over, when the dead on both sides have been finally counted and the generals and their opposite numbers have wine and dined, would it not make sense for this Government, unlike all previous Governments whether Tory, Labour or Lib-Lab, to make an unequivocal declaration that there will be no more arms sales to Fascist-style régimes? Would not that make sense?

**Mr. Pattie:** The question whether we sell military equipment to anyone turns on fundamental questions about whether we wish to supply our own Armed Forces with our own equipment, and the industrial consequences of that. In addition, we must have regard to the 200,000 plus jobs in this country that depend on the manufacture of military equipment.

**Mr. Winnick:** Is it not a fact that without the junta's threats and the invasion of the Falkland Islands, arms sales to Argentina would have been continued as previously, without murmur of protest from Conservative Members? Do arms continue to be sold to the Right-wing dictatorship in Chile and other such régimes where murder and torture are the order of the day?

**Mr. Pattie:** I repeat that all arms transfers are decided on the particular circumstances prevailing at the time. Obviously, no Government will make arms transfers to someone whom they have reason to believe will use them against them. That was no doubt exactly the case when the Labour Government decided to sell two type 42 destroyers to Argentina in 1970.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** Will my hon. Friend expand on his last answer and indicate the amount, in cash terms, of arms sold to Argentina by Labour Administrations and perhaps also indicate the type of arms that Labour Administrations have been prepared to sell to Argentina in recent years?

**Mr. Pattie:** I have already mentioned the type 42 destroyers. I think the House will be aware that the first consignment of Sea Dart missiles, Lynx helicopters and Blowpipe surface-to-air missiles were all supplied under previous Labour Governments.

**Mr. Robert C. Brown:** Much as the House will support the Government in refusing to sell arms to Warsaw

Pact countries, surely the overriding lesson that we should now learn is that Right-wing dictatorships are just as evil as Left-wing dictatorships.

**Mr. Pattie:** The same answer must apply—that all the situations prevailing at any particular time must be taken into account, irrespective of whether we are talking about different political situations in various parts of the world. All of that must be considered.

**Mr. Michael Marshall:** Does my hon. Friend not agree that hindsight wisdom seems to be flying about on the Labour Benches and that the reality and importance of arms sales is demonstrated by the Harrier and its great success on the AV8B?

**Mr. Pattie:** I agree with my hon. Friend, but what he has said relates to an earlier answer that I gave. That was the fundamental question whether we believe that we should be properly defended. We need equipment to carry out that requirement, and must decide from which country we shall get it. If we want to get it from Britain, it helps if we can have decent, long production runs, so that we can enjoy all the industrial benefits arising therefrom.

**Mr. Cryer:** Does the Minister recall that in August 1980 my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Newens) urged the chairman of the Conservative Party, who is a member of the War Cabinet, not to sell weapons of war to military juntas such as Argentina? Will the Minister comment on who was right—the chairman of the Conservative Party or my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow?

**Mr. Pattie:** As my right hon. Friend had no influence whatever over Argentina's decision, either to acquire Exocet missiles from France or type 42 destroyers from the Labour Government in 1970, I do not think that that question arises.

**Mr. Newens:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the unsatisfactory nature of that reply, I beg to give notice that I shall seek to raise the matter on the Adjournment at the earliest opportunity.

#### Type 42 Destroyer

11. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is satisfied that the type 42 destroyer is properly constructed to resist the effect of all known air-to-ship and ship-to-ship missiles.

17. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications of the destruction of HMS "Sheffield" by an air-launched surface-skimming missile.

**Mr. Pattie:** No ship can be constructed to resist the effect of all known anti-ship missiles. The circumstances and implications of the attack on HMS "Sheffield" are, however, being studied. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has made clear, we shall take full account of the lessons to be learnt from current operations in determining whether any changes are needed within the general framework of the policy announced last year.

**Mr. McNair-Wilson:** I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. In view of the sinking of HMS "Sheffield" and, in particular, the damage to the ship caused by fire, is my hon. Friend satisfied that the amount of aluminium used

in the superstructure does not give it an unreasonable proneness to damage by fire? By the same token, does he believe that conventional wiring should now be used in warships?

**Mr. Pattie:** Those are precisely the sort of detailed points that will be examined once we are in a position to know the full operational details, after the operation is satisfactorily concluded.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Is not the brutal lesson of "Sheffield" either that one goes in and destroys the bases from which these weapons are launched or that one withdraws the task force? Whereas some of us might want to withdraw the task force, is it a fact that the SAS or other operational troops did their best to go on to the South American mainland and destroy the bases?

**Mr. Pattie:** The hon. Gentleman is following press speculation, as he is entitled to do. On his question about the so-called brutal lesson of "Sheffield", I would say that nothing is quite as black or as white as he suggests.

**Mr. Crawshaw:** Is not one of the assessments that should be drawn from this instance the fact that it does not matter how sophisticated are one's weapons if one's adversary has weapons that are more sophisticated? Does this not show the illogicality of the argument of those who say that we have atomic missiles that can destroy the world 10 times over, since it means nothing if one is not capable of getting one of those missiles to the target?

**Mr. Pattie:** There is a good deal of military force in what the hon. Gentleman says. There is no point in having any weapon unless the delivery system also exists.

**Mr. Speaker:** Sir Patrick Wall.

**Mr. Dalyell:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the unsatisfactory nature of that reply, I beg to give notice that I shall seek to raise the matter on the Adjournment at the earliest opportunity.

**Mr. Speaker:** I cannot now call the hon. Member for Haltemprice (Sir P. Wall).

#### Gibraltar Dockyard

12. **Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if it is his intention to retain the existing labour force in the Gibraltar dockyard during the period of the Falklands crisis.

**Mr. Blaker:** The closure of the Royal naval dockyard is not expected to begin until 1983. The number of jobs in the yard is therefore unlikely to be significantly affected this year. The possibility of the commercial operation of the dockyard from 1983 onwards is being examined by the Gibraltar Government with assistance from ourselves.

**Mr. McQuarrie:** My hon. Friend will be aware of the considerable importance that was attached to Gibraltar during the time of the conversion of various vessels for the Falkland Islands crisis? Will he accept the fact that Gibraltar is the nearest port to the Falklands for the repair of any damaged naval vessels? In those circumstances, will he accept that it is absolutely essential that the labour force in Gibraltar is retained for so long as the crisis in the Falklands exists?

**Mr. Blaker:** I join my hon. Friend in extending congratulations to the work force in the Gibraltar naval



base and dockyard for what they did in preparing the task force for the South Atlantic. The naval base is to remain open. So far as the dockyard is concerned, we have said that when the appropriate time comes, we shall consider whether any adjustments are needed to our policy within our general strategy.

**Mr. John Silkin:** Is it not time that the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues told the House and the people of Gibraltar that the Gibraltar dockyard played a prominent part in the setting forth of the task force? Should that not be taken into account? Without it, the task force would not have been able properly to assemble.

**Mr. Blaker:** I am not sure that the conclusion of the right hon. Gentleman follows. But certainly, when the spray settles, if I may so express it, we shall look at the situation to see whether any adjustments are needed within our broad strategy.

#### Cyprus (Sovereign Base Area)

13. **Mr. Christopher Price** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to improve the arrangements for the defence of the sovereign bases areas of Cyprus from outside aggression and interference.

**Mr. Blaker:** We believe that the existing arrangements for the defence of the sovereign base areas are satisfactory. Plans are, of course, always kept under review.

**Mr. Price:** If the Turkish army were to invade the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus and threaten the sovereign territory of Britain in the bases, would the Government use force to prevent it doing so? Do the Government consider that the north part of Cyprus still remains the sovereign territory of the republic, as the Falklands, in spite of invasion, remain the sovereign territory of Britain?

**Mr. Blaker:** The first part of the hon. Gentleman's question is entirely hypothetical. I recall that when there was an invasion some years ago at the time of a Labour Government, the Government did not do very much about it. Sovereignty is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

#### PRIME MINISTER

##### Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Proctor** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 May.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the Australian Foreign Minister.

**Mr. Proctor:** During the course of a busy and exacting day will my right hon. Friend take time to pay tribute, with the support of the whole House, to the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces and merchant seamen in defence of British interests in the Falkland Islands? In the light of this, will my right hon. Friend give an assurance that there will be no negotiations on sovereignty with the Argentine or anyone else, because this would be unforfeivable and unforgettable?

**The Prime Minister:** I respond gladly to my hon. Friend's invitation to pay tribute to the courage and skill of our armed forces and of the merchant marine in the splendid work that they are doing. Our object is to retake the Falkland Islands. They are British sovereign territory. We wish to restore British administration. There will be a good deal of reconstruction to be done and then the future will have to be discussed with the Falkland Islanders. I shall be amazed if the Falkland Islanders are not now more hostile to the Argentinians than they were before.

**Mr. Foot:** I certainly join the right hon. Lady in paying tribute to the courage and skill of the British troops. May I turn to the second part of the matter to which she has referred? Can she clarify the attitude of the Government on the state of the possibilities of negotiation now? Does she agree that it is absolutely essential in the interests of saving lives—British lives along with other lives—that the possibilities of negotiation should be kept open, along with the military action?

**The Prime Minister:** Security Council resolution 502 has yet to be implemented. If it was implemented and the Argentine troops withdrew from the islands, peace would follow.

**Mr. Foot:** That is not the question I put to the right hon. Lady. The reason I put it—we have every right to put it and the country has the right to put it to her—is that the Secretary of State for Defence appears to us to speak in these matters in somewhat different terms from those used by the Foreign Secretary at the end of the debate on Thursday. I wish therefore to give the right hon. Lady a full opportunity to reply to this question. Does she agree fully with what was stated by the Foreign Secretary at the end of the debate on Thursday, when he said that we remained ready to negotiate and expanded upon what he meant. Does the right hon. Lady confirm that the Government absolutely adhere to what was stated by the Foreign Secretary on that occasion?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, but I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman has quite got the import of what I said. The end of the conflict would occur if there was withdrawal of Argentine forces in accordance with resolution 502. Unless that occurs, I do not think that any negotiation would get very far.

**Mr. Foot:** The right hon. Lady cannot leave these matters here. There are the questions that may be raised by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as he is entitled to do. I ask the right hon. Lady clearly, does she or does she not agree with what was said by the Foreign Secretary at the end of the debate on Thursday, when the decision to send in British troops had already been made?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not think that the Foreign Secretary would disagree for one moment with what I have said, or with what I am saying now. I make it perfectly, fully and abundantly clear that there can be no progress without Argentine withdrawal.

**Sir Timothy Kitson:** Will my right hon. Friend give an assurance to the House that, however difficult it may be, she will encourage those Falkland Islanders who can to leave Port Stanley before a major military confrontation takes place?

**The Prime Minister:** A number of Falkland Islanders have already left Port Stanley. I do not think that I can do

more to encourage them to leave. Many of them have already gone to the camps, and I am sure that they will be the best judges of their interests.

**Mr. James Lamond:** When the right hon. Lady is repeatedly asked if she adheres to what her Foreign Secretary says in a debate in this House, why does she not simply answer "Yes"?

**The Prime Minister:** Because, like me, my right hon. Friend has made about five different speeches. I wish to know precisely—[*Interruption.*]—He has made five different speeches, as the circumstances have changed. It would be amazing if circumstances had not changed. I agree with the Foreign Secretary's speeches, and the Foreign Secretary agrees with mine, which is totally unlike the Labour Party.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison:** When the Prime Minister is received by the Queen, will she consult Her Majesty about the early return of her representative to liberated British territory?

**The Prime Minister:** I understand that my hon. Friend is saying that with the restoration of British administration there should be an early return of the Governor. That is a matter under consideration.

**Q2. Mr. Cunliffe** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 25 May.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Cunliffe:** Does the right hon. Lady agree with another view of her Foreign Secretary, that once British rule is back in force on the islands and a period of resettlement follows—between six and 12 months was the period quoted—Britain will then seek, the Foreign Secretary has hinted, the aid of other Governments within the area a means of guaranteeing the long-term security of the islands? Can the right hon. Lady assure the House that these Governments will not be of a Fascist or military character, and especially that the despicable policy of South Africa should not be involved in any participation arrangements?

**The Prime Minister:** I hardly think that Fascist or military Governments would be the appropriate guarantors for any democracy.

**Mr. Eggar:** Although the good economic news that has come out recently has naturally been eclipsed by events in the Falklands, would my right hon. Friend care to comment on the tremendous improvement both in the retail price index and factory output prices? Is this not good news for competitiveness and, thus, for jobs?

**The Prime Minister:** The excellent news of a continually falling retail price index, a falling wholesale price index and input index is good news for British industry, for British sales overseas and good news for jobs.

**Mr. David Steel:** I wish to ask the Prime Minister a question on the distressing but necessary subject of compensation for the dependents of those who have been killed—[*Interruption.*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The right hon. Gentleman is entitled to ask his question.

**Mr. Steel:** Can the right hon. Lady, with her authority as Prime Minister, advise those members of the public who naturally wish to contribute something—[*Interruption.*]—whether—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This behaviour is not fair on the right hon. Gentleman. He must be allowed to complete his question.

**Mr. Steel:** Will the Government publish a list of existing organisations that already cater very well for those problems?

**Mr. Arthur Lewis:** Give them some of your radio and television earnings.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced earlier the setting up of a South Atlantic fund, that will have full charitable status, under the Ministry of Defence.

**Mr. John Townend:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the reported proposal of the Irish Government to table a resolution calling for a ceasefire at this stage is most unhelpful? Will she reassure the House that we shall not agree to a ceasefire until the Argentines agree to withdraw their troops or when the occupation of the islands is complete? Will my right hon. Friend use the veto necessary?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. There can be no ceasefire without full withdrawal of Argentine troops. That is in resolution 502 and if necessary, if there were an attempt to have a ceasefire without that, we would have to use the veto.

**Q3. Mr. Flannery** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 25 May.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Flannery:** In view of the confident assertion yesterday—some people might think over-confident—that the days of the Argentine garrison are numbered—

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** They are.

**Mr. Flannery:**—could we now have a cessation of hostilities? [*Interruption.*] I know that the bloodthirsty hooligans on the Tory Benches do not want that, but could we not discuss future sovereignty of the Falklands under the aegis of the United Nations, especially in view of the fact that the Tory British Nationality Act has deprived at least a third of the islanders of British nationality? What shall we do with those islands once we have them? Are we to have a permanent fleet on a vast scale there indefinitely, and are we to have an army down there indefinitely to protect them?

**The Prime Minister:** That is about seven questions. I wonder which to start on. The hon. Gentleman referred to the phrase in my right hon. Friend's speech that the days of the Argentine garrison are numbered. Does the hon. Gentleman not want those days to be numbered? We wish them to be numbered. He then called for a ceasefire while the invader was kept in occupation. We totally reject that. It would leave the whole paraphernalia of tyranny in place. Perhaps two answers will be enough for the hon. Gentleman.

Miss Fookes: Is my right hon. Friend satisfied with the flow of mail to and from the Falkland force, because I have received one or two complaints from my constituents about delays, and mail is important for morale?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sure that everything possible under the circumstances is being done to get mail both to the armed forces, and from them. I recognise the importance of mail, and I am confident that everything is being done.

Q4. **Mr. Bidwell** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 25 May.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Bidwell:** While in no way condoning or wishing to condone the Fascist junta's military aggression against the Falkland Islands, may I ask whether the Government are studying the situation being conveyed to us about the state of the junta in Argentina and the possibility of being able to make overtures to saner voices there? In that context, would it be better if the right hon. Lady dropped the idea of not allowing some Argentine families eventually to settle on the islands?

**The Prime Minister:** The islanders have enjoyed democratic Government for quite a long time. What the hon. Gentleman has spoken of is a matter for the executive

and legislative councils under British administration. The present law must continue until it is changed through the proper authority of those councils.

**Mr. Fairbairn:** Will my right hon. Friend ensure that no order is given restricting military action of the task force in any way that could possibly jeopardise one life of our forces, whatever the cost to the enemy?

**The Prime Minister:** We are concerned for the safety of our task force. We are also concerned not to have one more life than is necessary lost. We rightly rely totally on the professional views of those who are in charge. We have every confidence in their judgment and in their care for human life.

**Mr. Race:** As Argentina is likely to become a nuclear weapon State in the near future, is it not essential to recognise that that would raise the stakes considerably in the South Atlantic? Does not that point to the need for a rational negotiated settlement on a permanent basis for the Falkland Islands?

**The Prime Minister:** I should not have thought that the second question followed from the first. Argentina has nuclear power stations. I understand that those who have supplied the requisite uranium have done so under the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which supervises its use extremely carefully. Naturally, one hopes that countries such as Argentina that have nuclear power stations will join the nuclear non-proliferation agreement.

### Defence White Paper

22. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now announce the date for the publication of the White Paper on defence.

**Mr. Nott:** As I told the House on 27 April, the White Paper is substantially complete and can be published at any time. As soon as the House feels that it is appropriate, I will publish it.

**Mr. Race** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to publish the defence White Paper.

35. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to publish the defence White Paper.

**Mr. Nott:** I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes).

### Portsmouth and Chatham Shipyards

24. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received concerning the rundown of the naval shipyards at Portsmouth and Chatham; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Blaker:** In the course of April and May we have received 23 letters about the closure of Portsmouth dockyard and Chatham naval base. Our general strategy for the future of the dockyards remains unchanged, but in view of the present emergency no redundancy notices will be issued at Portsmouth and Chatham in the immediate future.

### Public Relations

25. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the public relations of the armed forces of the Crown, and in particular about the arrangements made in respect of the South Atlantic task force.

**Mr. Blaker:** The public relations of the Armed Forces of the Crown are primarily the responsibility, under my right hon. Friend, of the chief of public relations, supported by defence public relations staff, who include senior serving officers and civil servants. When we sent out the task force we were aware of the need to provide facilities for the press, both in London and in the South Atlantic, so that the facts of the operation as it proceeded could be made known to the general public. To this end, statements are made as necessary by a spokesman in a press centre specially set up for the purpose at the Ministry of Defence. Twenty-eight representatives of the United Kingdom media have sailed with the task force as fully accredited defence correspondents.

### British Army of the Rhine

28. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take further steps to increase the potential fighting capability of the British Army of the Rhine.

**Mr. Wiggin:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) on 23 March when I listed the major improvements to 1(BR) Corps' fighting capability since this Government took office—[Vol. 20, c. 787] The

progressive implementation of the re-equipment programme outlined in Cmnd. 8288 will result in further improvements in front-line equipment, stock levels and staying power. We shall continue to take the necessary steps to ensure that 1(BR) Corps' fighting capability remains commensurate with the threat.

### Sea Wolf

29. **Mr. Proctor** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to accelerate the programme to install Sea Wolf missile systems on ships of the Royal Navy; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Pattie:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter).

37. **Sir Patrick Wall** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, further to his answer of 27 April, *Official Report*, column 261, he will now expedite the production of the lightweight Sea Wolf anti missile system.

**Mr. Pattie:** We are already planning to fit the system into the earliest ship that could receive it on construction.

### Procurement Policy

31. **Mr. McNally** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has had from unions and companies in the aerospace industry concerning Government procurement policy; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Pattie:** Over the past year my right hon. Friend has received a variety of representations relating to aspects of Government procurement policy, many of them being concerned with particular projects or sites.

### North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

32. **Mr. Marks** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the present functions of the United Kingdom, Gibraltar and the British sovereign bases in Cyprus in the defence of the southern region of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

**Mr. Blaker:** The United Nations contributes in a number of ways to the security of the southern region of NATO. That The allied command Europe mobile force, to which we dedicate certain units, has deployment options to the southern region, as do both the land and air elements of the United Kingdom mobile force. Additionally we normally provide a frigate for NATO's naval on-call force Mediterranean—NAVOCFORMED—when it is activated, and regularly exercise with other NATO navies in the area.

Gibraltar's importance to the defence of the southern flank of the alliance lies, firstly, in its strategic position at the entrance to the Mediterranean, and secondly in the naval base and airfield facilities that it can offer to NATO ships and aircraft.

The sovereign base areas in Cyprus do not have a NATO role, but the presence and capability which Britain is able to maintain through the SBAs, at a strategically situated point in the Eastern Mediterranean, is clearly a significant element in the security of the region.

### Arms Sales

33. Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy on the sale of arms by the United Kingdom to non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries.

Mr. Pattie: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given earlier today to the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Newsen).

### Arms Exports

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to stop all exports of arms until the end of the Falklands crisis; and if he will make any resumption dependent upon a full review of existing policy.

Mr. Pattie: No.

### Woolwich Arsenal West (Land Usage)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce the results of the Property Services Agency's studies of land usage at Woolwich Arsenal West and the possible construction of a new headquarters building for the Quality Assurance Directorate (Ordnance).

Mr. Wiggin: The studies conducted by the Property Services Agency are almost complete and the findings will be considered as soon as they are available.

### Service Widows (Pensions)

Mr. Ian Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence what would be the cost of upgrading the totality of pensions paid to widows drawing such pensions as a result of the death or injury of their husbands on active service in the Second World War to the level and conditions applying to pensions which will become payable to the widows of Service men killed on active service in Northern Ireland or the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Wiggin: It is not possible to identify precisely the number of widows who are receiving pensions arising from the death or injury of their husbands in the Second World War. However, on a broad estimate it is expected that the additional cost of paying these pensions at the rate of those currently awarded would be of the order of £135 million a year. If associated lump sum payments were additionally paid at current rates this would add a further once for all cost of around £405 million.

### Defence Sales Exhibition

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the total number of countries currently invited to the next defence sales exhibition to be staged in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Pattie: Approximately 100 countries have been invited to attend the 1982 British army equipment exhibition.

### Chile (Arms Sales)

Mr. Flannery asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now review his policy on arms sales to Chile.

Mr. Pattie: We shall continue to consider the sale of military equipment to Chile on a case by case basis in accordance with the policy announced by the present Government on 22 July 1980.—[Vol. 989, c. 123.]

### Nuclear Weapons (Transportation)

Mr. Cryer asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the regulations under which the transport of nuclear weapons is governed.

Mr. Pattie: No. For security reasons it would not be appropriate to give details of the regulations involved. However, these regulations which govern movement of all nuclear weapons by the Ministry of Defence within this country follow the very strict criteria laid down by the nuclear weapons safety committee, an independent body which reports directly to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### University Places

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether steps are taken to encourage school students in the Republic of Ireland to apply for university places in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Students from the Republic of Ireland and other countries are free to apply for admission to all higher education courses in Northern Ireland. Such applications are considered on their merits. The Government place no barriers in their way, and the Northern Ireland institutions would welcome an increase in students from outside Northern Ireland.

### University and Polytechnic Staffs

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many redundancies he anticipates amongst the ancillary, clerical and academic staffs of the New university of Ulster and the Ulster polytechnic, as a result of the amalgamation of these two institutions;

(2) when he expects appointments to the university created as a result of the amalgamation of the New university of Ulster and the Ulster polytechnic to be announced.

Mr. Scott: It is not yet possible to make any assessment of the staffing requirements of the new institution to replace New university of Ulster and the Ulster polytechnic. These will be determined by the scope and nature of the new institution's work, matters which are to be considered by the steering group responsible for the planning of the new institution.

### Student Places

Mr. Kilfedder asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of third level student places required in Northern Ireland in 1985, 1990 and 1995.

Mr. Scott: I have made no such estimates, but I would draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to chapter 6 of the final report of the higher education review group for Northern Ireland, in which it was envisaged that the

Mr. Nott: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester (Mr. Buck) and to other hon. Members.

30. Mr. William Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the total losses in personnel and equipment to date in the South Atlantic; and what is the estimated cost of replacement of ships and aircraft.

Mr. Blaker: The most recent reports indicate that 74 British personnel have lost their lives on operations in the South Atlantic. Three warships, HMS "Sheffield", HMS "Ardent" and HMS "Antelope" were damaged by enemy action and subsequently sank. One Harrier aircraft and two Gazelle helicopters have been brought down by enemy action. Eleven other aircraft—four Harriers, five Sea King helicopters and two Wessex—have been lost, but not as a result of Argentine action. We are urgently studying the whole question of replacement.

36. Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence what change he expects in the numbers of armed forces deployed in the region of the Falkland Islands in the near future.

Mr. Nott: It would not be sensible, for operational reasons, to make such a forecast. I refer the right hon. Gentleman, however, to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester (Mr. Buck) and to other hon. Members.

#### Shoeburyness (Defence Establishment)

21. Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the future of his Department's establishment at Shoeburyness.

Mr. Wiggin: As my predecessor told my hon. Friend on 17 March 1981, there is a long-term requirement for the proof and experimental establishment at Shoeburyness to continue with its present defence functions.

#### Defence White Paper

22. Mr. Haynes asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now announce the date for the publication of the White Paper on defence.

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#### Procurement Policy

31. Mr. McNally asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has had from unions and

(4) if he will seek to impose an upper speed limit for heavy lorries to reduce water spray in wet road conditions.

**Mrs. Chalker:** My Department has carried out a considerable amount of research into the problem of vehicle spray in conjunction with the University of Southampton and the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, and some vehicle and component manufacturers are conducting their own investigations.

As a result of this research, and in response to a request from this Department, the British Standards Institution is now examining the formulation of a standard spray reduction equipment that could be used as a basis for regulations. The major operators' associations and manufacturers are participating in this work. The work has only just started, and there is much to be done; I cannot say when it will be completed, but I have made it clear that the Government are determined to find solutions to the problem as soon as this can practically be done. The use of spray reduction equipment is an important ancillary step in improving road conditions where heavy lorries have to travel in wet weather.

An additional upper speed limit for heavy lorries in wet conditions would entail problems of both definition and enforcement. On motorways, however, it is open to the police to take account of wet conditions in deciding whether to signal temporary advisory speed limits.

#### Aire Valley Trunk Road

**Mr. Cryer** asked the Secretary of State for Transport on which date he now expects to make the announcement on the Aire Valley trunk road proposal.

**Mrs. Chalker:** The announcement is being made today.

#### Dangerous Materials (Transportation)

**Mr. Cryer** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation to give statutory effect to British Railways Board "List of Dangerous Goods Class 7 Radioactive Material BR 22426", 1977 edition; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eyre:** No. The British Railways Board is empowered to establish the conditions under which any dangerous goods may be accepted for carriage by rail and to satisfy themselves that those conditions have been complied with. The existing conditions require that all consignments of radioactive materials should comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency's "Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials". I have no reason to believe that public safety would be enhanced by an additional measure of the kind suggested.

### DEFENCE

#### Royal Ordnance Factories

19. **Mr. Straw** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's plans for the future organisation and order load of the Royal Ordnance factories.

**Mr. Nott:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Preston, North (Mr. Atkins) on 20 May.—[Vol. 24, c. 151.]

#### Falkland Islands

20. **Mr. Hal Miller** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is satisfied with the response from British trade and industry to requests he has made in connection with the assembly and maintenance of the task force.

**Mr. Wiggin:** Yes. The response to requests for assistance in the present emergency has been magnificent and I should like publicly to express the Government's thanks and appreciation to the firms and their work forces involved.

23. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Minister for Defence whether he will make a statement on the current operation of the Falklands task force.

26. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is satisfied with the progress shown in the operations of the naval task force located around the Falkland Islands.

27. **Mr. Neubert** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on the latest developments in the Falkland Islands conflict.

**Mr. Nott:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester (Mr. Buck) and to other hon. Members.

30. **Mr. William Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the total losses in personnel and equipment to date in the South Atlantic; and what is the estimated cost of replacement of ships and aircraft.

**Mr. Blaker:** The most recent reports indicate that 74 British personnel have lost their lives on operations in the South Atlantic. Three warships, HMS "Sheffield", HMS "Ardent" and HMS "Antelope" were damaged by enemy action and subsequently sank. One Harrier aircraft and two Gazelle helicopters have been brought down by enemy action. Eleven other aircraft—four Harriers, five Sea King helicopters and two Wessex—have been lost, but not as a result of Argentine action. We are urgently studying the whole question of replacement.

36. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what change he expects in the numbers of armed forces deployed in the region of the Falkland Islands in the near future.

**Mr. Nott:** It would not be sensible, for operational reasons, to make such a forecast. I refer the right hon. Gentleman, however, to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester (Mr. Buck) and to other hon. Members.

#### Shoeburyness (Defence Establishment)

21. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the future of his Department's establishment at Shoeburyness.

**Mr. Wiggin:** As my predecessor told my hon. Friend on 17 March 1981, there is a long-term requirement for the proof and experimental establishment at Shoeburyness to continue with its present defence functions.

## British Rail

3.31 pm

**Mr. Leslie Spriggs (St. Helens):** I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 9, for the purpose of discussing a specific matter of public and parliamentary importance that should have urgent consideration, namely, "the railway crisis, which may lead to a national railway strike, and which may cause industrial strife throughout the country".

The McCarthy report has vindicated the National Union of Railwaymen national executive committee's policy. Flexible rostering proposed by the British Railways Board has been accepted by 90 per cent. of NUR members. The British Railways Board plans to close a number of British Rail workshops with the loss of 5,000 jobs. The British Rail engineering works at Shildon will be closed and there will be rundowns at Harwich, Swindon and Derby locomotive works, while thousands of passenger coaches stand in sidings awaiting repairs and many of the main line express trains are running under strength from North to South and from South to North because, as one member of the board explained to me, "We cannot get them repaired." That is happening when the British Railways Board proposes to close the most essential part of British Rail Engineering Ltd's workshops.

I wish to draw the attention to the House to the fact that with the present problems facing the railwaymen, the situation could escalate into a national strike. It would affect the coal mining industry and the electricity generating industry and there would be consequent damage to the British economy.

For those reasons I submit that this is an urgent, important and appropriate matter for debate, which should not be left until it is too late for parliamentary action.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Helens (Mr. Spriggs) gave me notice before 12 noon today that he would seek leave to move the Adjournment of the House to discuss a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely, "the railway crisis, which may lead to a national railway strike and which may cause industrial strife throughout the country".

Such an application was made yesterday by the right hon. Member for Barrow-in-Furness (Mr. Booth). I fear that there are no different considerations today from yesterday, when I gave my ruling. Therefore, I am unable to submit the hon. Gentleman's application to the House.

## South American Mainland (SAS Operations)

3.35 pm

**Mr. Tam Dalyell (West Lothian):** I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 9, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the operations by the SAS on the South American mainland".

I gave you notice before 12 noon today, Mr. Speaker, of the subject that I have mentioned, which I hoped to be able to withdraw because I thought that it would be cleared up in defence questions or Prime Minister's questions. In applying for an Adjournment debate under Standing Order No. 9, I believe that it would not be right to argue the case one way or the other for those operations. Many of us understand that in view of Exocet and other subjects discussed at Question Time.

Whatever one's view, surely the matter must be cleared up one way or the other as a matter of importance and urgency. It is an important matter for this country because the impression is put abroad in the face of lack of contradiction—witness the front page of today's *Daily Mail*—that those operations have taken place. Some of us would argue, whatever our views on the general issue hitherto, that any operation on the mainland of the South American continent raises the matter to an entirely different order of importance and urgency. I do not want to abuse the Standing Order No. 9 procedure, but through you, Mr. Speaker, I must state that this is an important subject. Perhaps the Leader of the House will volunteer a short statement. The matter was not cleared up by the Minister of State when he answered question No. 17.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for West Lothian (Mr. Dalyell) gave me notice before 12 noon today that he would seek leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the operations by the SAS on the South American mainland".

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for confining himself to the question of urgency and importance rather than seeking to make the speech that he would have made had his application been granted. I listened with anxiety to the hon. Gentleman, but I must rule that his submission does not fall within the provisions of the Standing Order and, therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.